UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
47th meeting
held on
Thursday, 10 February 1994
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/48/SR.47
1 March 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

94-80324 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Financing for the expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (A/48/7/Add.5; A/C.5/48/67)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretary-General was requesting an additional appropriation of $33,440,900 under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 to cover the requirements of the expanded mandate and size of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) to 31 July 1994.

2. Mr. JONAH (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs) said that the Secretary-General was grateful to the Advisory Committee for the urgency with which it had considered his report and addressed the issue of financing for the expansion of UNOMSA. The international community was looking to the United Nations to assist the process of democratization in South Africa, and the Organization would have been unable to act without prompt action by the Advisory Committee.

3. The Secretary-General's Special Representative was already in South Africa, and the first 200 observers were being dispatched. Quick action by the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly would enable the deployment of observers to be completed. The United Nations had long been concerned with the important issue of South Africa, and it was gratifying that there would soon be an end to apartheid with the establishment of a democratic society in which all South Africans could live in peace.

4. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) noted the commitment of the Secretary-General to respond to the challenge of establishing UNOMSA in a speedy and efficient manner. When, under section 4 of the programme budget, the General Assembly had approved an appropriation of $8.9 million for UNOMSA for the period 1 January to 31 July 1994 it had already been apparent that additional activities would become necessary, subject to decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, in the early part of the year.

5. The Security Council had subsequently decided to expand the mandate of UNOMSA in areas relating to the conduct of free and democratic elections. Since the additional requirements relating to the expanded mandate exceeded $10 million, which was the limit of commitments that ACABQ could authorize under General Assembly resolution 48/229 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, it was necessary to request the resources from the General Assembly. If the revised estimate for the expanded mandate of UNOMSA was approved, it would entail revision of the initial appropriation for 1994-1995. An additional appropriation in respect of UNOMSA would mean that there would be an assessment on Member States. The request before the Committee fell within the scope of financial regulation 5.2 (a), which provided for supplementary appropriations for which contributions had not previously been assessed on Member States.

(Mr. Takasu)

6. The cash-flow situation of the Organization was likely to remain difficult during 1994, and it was anticipated that there would be a deficit in the General Fund by August. Further, at such an early stage of implementation of the budget for the biennium 1994-1995, it was not possible to determine whether any savings would result. Accordingly, given the substantial amounts involved in funding the expanded mandate of UNOMSA, he trusted that approval of that mandate would go hand in hand with approval of the concomitant financing.

7. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the General Assembly had already appropriated some $22 million for UNOMSA and that the Secretary-General was now requesting an additional $33.4 million in respect of the expansion of the mission.

8. The Advisory Committee noted, in paragraph 10 of its report (A/48/7/Add.5), that should the General Assembly decide that the expenses of UNOMSA should continue to be a charge on the regular budget, they would be met from the General Fund, and that a decision might be needed on the timing of additional assessments. If the budget of UNOMSA was financed from a special account on the basis of the scale for peace-keeping operations, however, an immediate assessment would be required. The question of the timing of the assessment would thus need to be determined by the General Assembly, taking into account, inter alia, the cash-flow situation.

9. The Advisory Committee pointed out in paragraph 11 of its report that there was a need for further policy clarification in connection with electoral assistance missions and the related expenditure, an issue which could, perhaps, be taken up at a later stage.

10. In paragraphs 12 to 24 of its report, the Advisory Committee indicated areas where, with due regard for efficiency and proper management, savings could be effected. In paragraph 17 the Advisory Committee was not recommending a reduction in the number of General Service staff, but simply noting that some should be provided from within the Secretariat and the rest should be recruited locally. The Secretary-General should be given flexibility, provided that the budgetary recommendation of the Advisory Committee concerning an additional appropriation was not exceeded. ACABQ was recommending approval of an amount of $30,040,900 for the expansion of UNOMSA for the period 1 January to 31 July 1994.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that he had been approached by the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Africa, who had stressed the need for flexibility in connection with the matter before the Committee. They had also noted the importance of voluntary contributions to enable developing countries to send observers.

12. He proposed the following draft decision for adoption by the Committee:

"The General Assembly,

(The Chairman)

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on financing for the expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (A/C.5/48/67) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/48/7/Add.5),

Authorizes the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $30,040,900 for the expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa;

Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a performance report on the mission;

Decides that additional appropriations for UNOMSA will be considered in the light of the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General."

13. Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba) said that certain aspects of the financing of UNOMSA had not yet been resolved, and would await the performance report on the mission. He proposed the addition of the words "without prejudice to the mode of financing of this operation" at the end of the first paragraph of the draft decision, so as to bring it into line with earlier decisions on UNOMSA.

14. Mr. KEATING (New Zealand) said that his delegation was uncomfortable with the draft decision proposed by the Chairman. The matter before the Committee was a political rather than a financial issue, relating to a question which had long been of importance to the United Nations. It would be difficult to reject the Secretary-General's carefully thought out proposal regarding the cost of UNOMSA on the basis of a very flimsy presentation by the Advisory Committee, whose recommendations had no apparent justification. Accordingly he proposed that the draft decision should be amended to reinstate the Secretary-General's figure.

15. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that his delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, which had in fact provided adequate explanation for a reduction of some $3.4 million, to an amount of $30 million. The Committee would have an opportunity during its consideration of the performance report on the mission to determine whether additional resources were actually needed.

16. He agreed with the representative of Cuba that the draft decision should be amended to include language that would indicate that the mode of financing was not being prejudged. Lastly, if the draft decision was adopted, it would appear that any extension of the mission would be subject to consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session of a performance report on the mission, while the current mandate would expire at the end of July 1994, thus leaving a gap in the mandate. He requested clarification of what would happen should it prove necessary to extend the mandate.

17. The CHAIRMAN noted that it was for the Security Council, and, to a lesser extent, the General Assembly to take decisions on that aspect. The role of the Fifth Committee was limited to the financing of UNOMSA. In any event, the

(The Chairman)

Committee would note that the first paragraph of the proposed draft decision referred to commitments, and that the last referred to appropriations.

18. Mr. SY (Senegal) agreed that the UNOMSA operation was very important, and that, in some instances at least, the reasoning employed by the Advisory Committee was not very convincing. It would be preferable to accept the technical assessment made by the Secretariat given the situation in the field and the importance of the political questions involved.

19. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) agreed with the representatives of Senegal and New Zealand that the resources requested for financing the expansion of the Observer Mission in South Africa should be approved. However, he could not support the amendment to the draft decision proposed by the representative of Cuba.

20. Ms. SHEAROUSE (United States of America) said that UNOMSA was an important mission and the Committee should therefore respond in a timely and decisive manner to the Secretary-General's request. The concerns expressed by the representatives of Cuba and Morocco were addressed in the third paragraph of the draft decision. While she was surprised at the speed with which the decision was being taken, given the current financial situation of the Organization, she was nevertheless prepared to accept the draft decision proposed by the Chairman, even though the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee was itself excessive.

21. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that he supported the text proposed by the Chairman, since the proposed mode of financing was consistent with the provisions of section 4 of the regular budget, which the General Assembly had adopted by consensus.

22. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the amendment proposed by the representative of Cuba would create a situation in which the additional funds requested would have to be administered separately. In his earlier report relating to financing of UNOMSA (A/C.5/47/79), the Secretary-General had requested an appropriation of $13,121,300 under section 2 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. Pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 41/213, it had been proposed that, since the additional requirements were of an extraordinary nature, relating to the maintenance of peace and security, the request should be treated outside the procedures related to the contingency fund. The General Assembly, in section XIX of its resolution 47/219, had approved the requested appropriation under section 2 of the 1992-1993 programme budget "on the understanding that these requirements would be treated outside the procedures related to the contingency fund and without prejudice to the future mode of financing".

The meeting was suspended at 4.15 p.m. and resumed at 5.05 p.m.

23. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to resume its consideration of the draft decision.

24. Mr. KEATING (New Zealand) that his objections were not to the text but rather to the reduction in the amount requested. The Advisory Committee's recommendations were unsubstantiated and the cuts it proposed were arbitrary and simplistic. However, given the importance of UNOMSA and the urgent nature of the request, his delegation would go along with the draft decision in spite of its serious reservations.

25. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that he would support the text proposed by the Chairman, since UNOMSA should not be viewed as a peace-keeping mission, as such, but rather as a good offices mission of the Secretary-General.

26. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that, in a spirit of compromise, his delegation would not insist on the adoption of the Advisory Committee's recommendations. In order to address the concerns of a number of delegations, however, he wished to propose that the words "without prejudice to the mode of financing of similar operations" should be included at the end of the second paragraph of the draft decision. His proposed amendment was self-explanatory and was aimed at ensuring that the current decision would not constitute a precedent.

27. Mr. SY (Senegal) said that the Chairman's draft was acceptable in so far as it contained all the necessary elements and would permit the Committee to adopt a decision at its current meeting.

28. Mr. OWADE (Kenya) said that the Chairman's proposal represented a compromise which would facilitate a rapid decision on an operation that was important not only to South Africa but to the international community as a whole.

29. Mr. NDOBOLI (Uganda) supported the Colombian amendment, which addressed the concerns of a number of delegations.

30. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that he could not accept the Colombian amendment, since the activity in question related not to peace-keeping but rather to the good offices of the Secretary-General, which should be financed from the regular budget. He hoped that the representative of Colombia would withdraw his proposal and that the Chairman's text would be adopted without change.

31. Mr. ZEVELAKIS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that it was important for the Committee to adopt an early decision in order to ensure the effectiveness of UNOMSA. The European Union supported the draft decision proposed by the Chairman.

32. Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba) said that the Committee should examine the financial aspects of the Secretary-General's request. In that connection, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee were analytical and far from simplistic. To criticize the Advisory Committee in the manner that had been done was not in keeping with the spirit of cooperation that should exist within the Committee. The amendment proposed by Colombia did not challenge the substance of the draft decision. Before the Committee considered that proposed amendment, however, the Controller should clearly spell out if it would affect

(Mr. Fontaine-Ortiz, Cuba)

the proper functioning of UNOMSA. That alone should be the criterion for the Committee's decision on the draft amendment.

33. Mr. HAMMARKSJÖLD (Sweden), speaking also on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, said that the Nordic countries supported the draft decision proposed by the Chairman.

34. Mr. DAMICO (Brazil) said that, while his delegation was willing to accept the Chairman's text in a spirit of compromise, it was ready to undertake informal consultations to see whether the Advisory Committee's recommendations could be reconciled with the request of the Secretary-General. He agreed with the Cuban delegation's suggestion that the Controller should indicate what impact the adoption of the proposed amendment would have on UNOMSA, which had a vital role to play in ensuring the birth of a democratic, united and non-racial South Africa.

35. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation was in favour of providing without delay the funding requested for UNOMSA. She had some difficulty, however, with the Colombian amendment and would therefore welcome the clarification that had been requested from the Controller.

36. Mr. HEART (Panama) said that his delegation supported the Chairman's draft, although the Colombian amendment was not without merit and therefore also acceptable.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that he could agree to the Colombian amendment.

38. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said that his delegation was strongly committed to the political process in South Africa. With regard to the Colombian amendment, it was prudent to be specific as other peace-keeping operations were not being considered. He therefore proposed the insertion of the word "future" between the words "similar" and "operations" to remove any ambiguity.

39. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) asked for an answer from the Controller in response to the Moroccan delegation's question.

40. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the operation of UNOMSA would not be affected. However, it was for the General Assembly to decide on any future peace-keeping operations proposed by the Secretary-General.

41. Mr. ZEVELAKIS (Greece) asked for a brief suspension so that he could consult with other delegations of the European Union.

The meeting was suspended at 5.40 p.m. and resumed at 6 p.m.

42. Mr. BEN HAMIDA (Tunisia) said that he favoured approval of the Secretary-General's requests. However, the Chairman's proposal would be acceptable without the addition to the first paragraph proposed by the representative of Cuba, which made the text ambiguous. It would be best to speed up the approval

(Mr. Ben Hamida, Tunisia)

of the draft text in the interest of South Africa and the entire international community.

43. Mr. SY (Senegal) said that he supported the draft decision proposed by the Chairman, since it covered the financial aspect of the issue by specifying the maximum amount to be authorized and gave a clear political message both to the Secretary-General and the South African nation. The latter point was particularly important since there were some parties looking for a pretext to impede the success of the operation.

44. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that he supported the Chairman's proposal as formulated and once again appealed to the delegations of Colombia and Cuba not to insist on their amendment as the decision would simply entail continuing the existing mode of financing of UNOMSA.

45. Mr. ZEVELAKIS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he was ready to accept the Chairman's text without any amendment.

46. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said that his delegation was also ready to accept the Chairman's text and called upon the representative of Colombia to withdraw his amendment.

47. The CHAIRMAN suggested the inclusion, in place of the Colombian amendment, of a second preambular paragraph which he hoped would meet the concerns of all delegations. It would read as follows: "Bearing in mind the ongoing work of the General Assembly on the mode of financing of United Nations activities".

48. Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba) said that his delegation's proposal had been intended to block attempts to abolish the special scale of peace-keeping operations, which would have a very harmful effect particularly on those countries which were classified in groups and under the special scale. Since there was no consensus among the countries in groups (c) and (d) under the special scale, he preferred to keep the text as proposed by the Chairman without amendment.

49. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to adopt his original proposal.

50. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that his proposal had been intended to ensure that UNOMSA would be a complete success and that the interests of developing countries would be protected. If the concern of developing countries could not be clearly reflected in a consensus text, then he would like to place on record his delegation's understanding that the draft decision was without prejudice to the mode of financing of future peace-keeping operations.

51. The CHAIRMAN said he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the text of the draft decision as originally proposed, without a vote.

52. It was so decided.

53. Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba) said that the statement by the Colombian delegation fully reflected his delegation's position. The Committee's decision did not in any way prejudge the future financing of any operation, including operations that were similar to UNOMSA.

54. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Colombia. The arrangement adopted for the financing of UNOMSA required further study and her delegation was prepared at the appropriate time to discuss how similar operations should be financed in the future.

55. Mr. VARELA (Chile) said that his delegation had gone along with the consensus on the understanding that approval of the decision was without prejudice to the mode of financing of other similar operations.

56. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the prompt action by the Fifth Committee on the Secretary-General's proposals would make possible the smooth operation of UNOMSA. The Secretariat would do its best to adhere to the recommendations of ACABQ. It was the Secretary-General's position that in view of the serious cash-flow projections and the fact that the forty-eighth regular session of the General Assembly had given the Secretary-General authority for several activities without approving appropriations, he might have to return to the General Assembly with additional financing requests for UNOMSA earlier than the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly should the situation worsen.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

57. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the proposed programme of work in document A/C.5/48/L.37, which he trusted would be useful to delegations and would enable the Advisory Committee and other bodies to coordinate their work with that of the Fifth Committee.

58. Ms. SAEKI (Japan) said that the scale of assessments should also be taken up at the resumed session.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.